Reviewer's report

Title: Evaluation of the impact of implementing nursing guidelines on delivery of care in hospitals and community settings

Version: 1 Date: 12 June 2007

Reviewer: Carolyn Clancy

Reviewer's report:

General This is a well written paper on an important topic, but the conclusions are limited by methodologic flaws.

-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

It is unclear why or whether the investigators were unable to conduct patient interviews for the delirium-dementia-depression and venous leg ulcer guidelines.

Was pilot data collected from charts for each guideline and at the various sites used in the study? How confident are the authors of the validity or accuracy of the chart reviews? (a generic challenge with this kind of study)

Difficult to compare guideline implementation in hospital vs. community-based settings, given differences in patient's health status and care needs, as well as possible differences in the clinical roles and responsibilities of nurses at the different sites of care. [Comment / elaboration required]

Given the differences in the sites of care, was the main objective to ensure that patients received all the guideline-based care they needed?

A discussion about the challenges of implementing guidelines in different sites should be included. Especially if some sites are experienced in implementing changes/guidelines and leadership is supportive of clinical quality improvement cycles.

It is important to know how the implementation of the guidelines affected the workload of nurses and the actual processes of care (e.g., time processing patient, comprehensiveness of care)

Was there any possible contamination among care providers or patients? (e.g., concurrent 'campaigns')

Were the breastfeeding and delirium-dementia-depression guidelines implemented at the same teaching hospital(s)?

Was the assessment of patient technique with asthma medications standardized?

-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests.